

Consideration of the dedication of the Cave River Valley Nature Preserve in Washington County

The proposed Nature Preserve is a 63.2 acre property in the northwest portion of Washington County, approximately 3.0 miles north of the town of Campbellsburg. This nature preserve protects a portion of the Clifty Creek drainage, along with upland forests and important karst topography in Indiana's Mitchell Karst Plain Section of the Highland Rim Natural Region.

This Nature Preserve consists of a deep, wooded valley with steep limestone bluffs, narrow backbone ridges, 4 major cave and 3 minor ones, with substantial streams emerging from caves into white-water cascades. The two most extensive caves are River Cave and Endless Cave. The biota of the caves includes blind fish, blind crayfish, cave crickets, and lightly-pigmented salamanders. This karst topography holds particular significance as this was the eighth largest Indiana hibernaculum in 2007, with additional surrounding summer habitat for the federally and state endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*).

The property has a long cultural history including the 1800's milling history which used Cave River. A variety of mills and dams were built and used to grind cornmeal, make whiskey, apple cider, and as a power source. The commercial cave history begins with the first written description of Endless Cave or Dry Cave dating to 1896 by Dr. W.S. Blachley. The early caving community have long ago named and surveyed this cave system which will be managed for the health of the bats but still allow for guided tours during the appropriate summer season.

Noteworthy animal species found in this Nature Preserve include:

Myotis sodalis – Indiana bat, *Myotis lucifugus* – Little Brown bat, *Pipistrellus subflavus* – Eastern pipistrelle, the Gemmed satyr, and multiple endemic cave species.

This tract is owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources Division of State Parks & Reservoirs.

The Division of Nature Preserves recommends dedication of this site as a State Nature Preserve.

Attached is Nature Preserves exhibit A.

Cave River Valley Nature Preserve

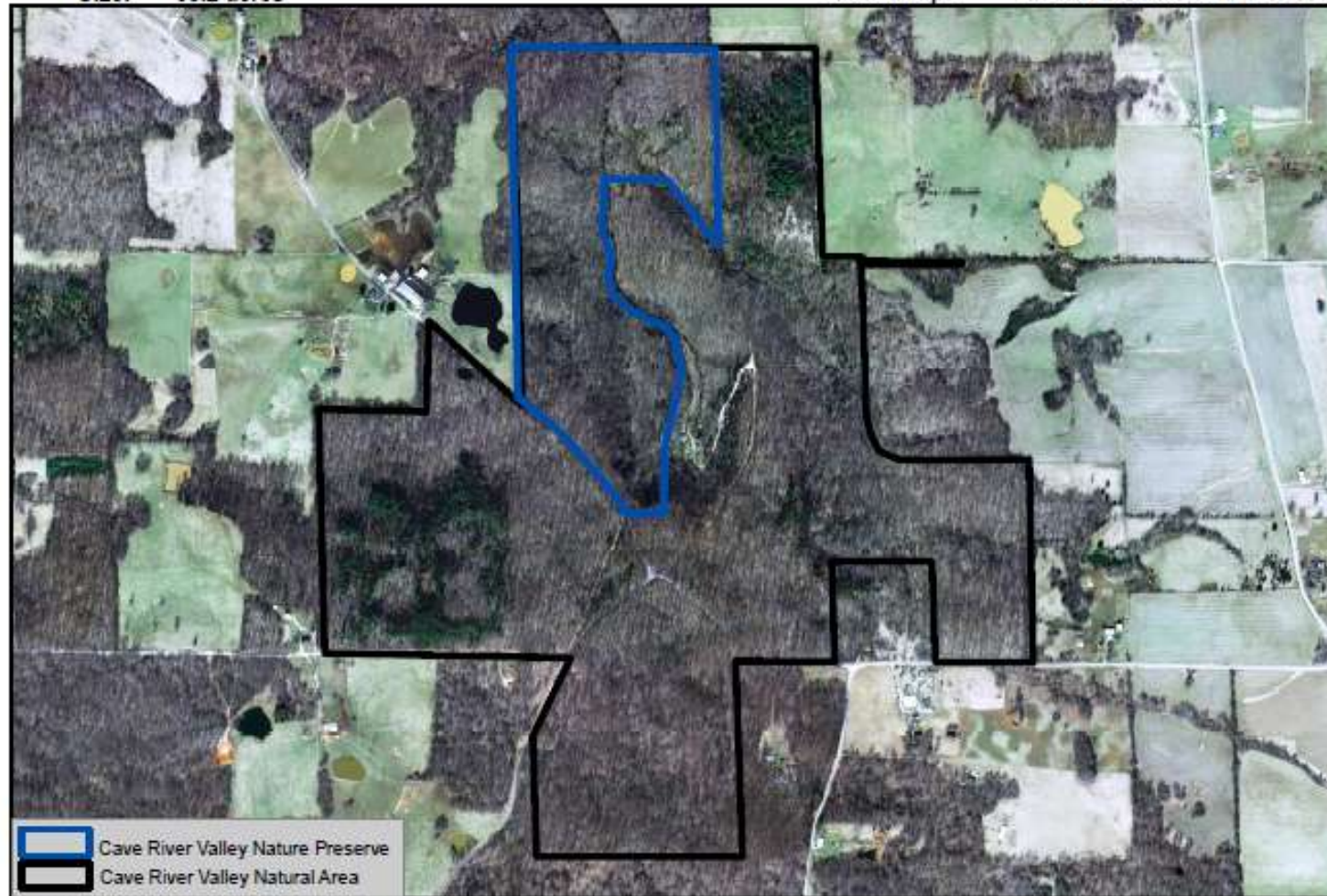
County: Washington

Size: 63.2 acres

Exhibit A

USGS Quad Map: Campbellsburg & Smedley

Ownership: IDNR State Parks & Reservoirs



map created by R Wilson IDNR Nature Preserves 11.8.2013

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

